

**SUBJECT:** Creating a commission to study laws restricting people with felonies

**COMMITTEE:** Corrections — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Herrero, Kacal, Allen, V. Jones, R. Lopez, Sherman, Swanson, Toth  
0 nays  
1 absent — Murr

**WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Lauren Johnson, ACLU of Texas; M Paige Williams, Dallas County Criminal District Attorney; Marc Hoskins, Disability Rights Texas; Charlie Malouff, Texas C.U.R.E., Inc; Susan Stewart)  
  
Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Henry Bohnert)  
  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Benny Hernandez III)

**BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that the unintended consequences of certain laws may create barriers to reintegration into society and self-sufficiency for people convicted of felony offenses.

**DIGEST:** HB 927 would create a commission to study and review all state laws that restrict the rights or activities of persons convicted of a felony offense, including the right to vote, the right to serve on a grand or petit jury, and eligibility for certain occupational licenses. The commission would be required to make recommendations to the Legislature regarding the repeal or amendment of laws that were identified as being overly restrictive, or not otherwise serving the best interest of justice.  
  
The commission would be composed of nine appointed members, including:

- two members appointed by the governor;
- two members appointed by the lieutenant governor;

- two members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;
- one member appointed by the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Texas; and
- two members appointed by the presiding judge of the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

The governor would be required to designate one member of the commission to serve as the presiding officer.

The officials making these appointments would be required to ensure that the membership of the commission included judges, legal scholars, and relevant business and governmental interests. The commission would meet at the call of the presiding officer. Members of the commission would not be entitled to compensation or reimbursement of expenses.

The bill would require appointments to be made to the commission not later than the 60th day after the effective date of the bill.

By November 1, 2024, the commission would be required to report findings and recommendations to the governor, lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives, the Supreme Court of Texas, and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. Recommendations would include any specific statutes that the commission recommended repealing or amending.

The commission would be abolished and the bill would expire December 31, 2024.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2023.